

The RYS Daily 5/20/07 Last Days XII

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1 page 329 - 330.

R. Israel next summoned R. Jacob Lipschitz, personal secretary and confidant of R. Isaac Elchanan, and requested him to invite his rabbi to be the leader in the performance of the mitzvah, i.e. to be the first to register his protest with the Baron. After him, the rest of the rabbis were to follow suit.

This was not enough for R. Israel. He wanted to explain matters fully to the Baron, to convince him that the whole matter was ill-advised. R. Israel preferred to influence by persuasion rather than by coercion. He accordingly proposed that R. Jacob compile a booklet covering all aspects of the problem. He used an analogy to put his view across: "Now, if an intelligent father punished his son, whom he loves, for bad behavior, he first explains to the child how wrongly he had behaved and what punishment he deserved. In this way the son would realize that the punishment did not stem from hatred or cruelty, but was administered in consequence of the act. This would teach the son to refrain from repeating it in the future. So, too, when a government punishes criminals and rebels, it issues an indictment and also gives the reasons for the punishment, so that the public should know that the punishment fits the crime. Now if the Ray, the Gaon, will address his written protest to the Baron, let us assume that the nobles of St. Petersburg will do him the favor of withdrawing their support from their plan. The protests, alone, however, will not suffice to explain the reasons, the harm and damage that the Seminary will bring to our holy Torah. They will only look upon this as an arbitrary decree forced on them by rabbinical authority, and not concede the point out of inner, reasoned reflection. Hence how good it would be were such a special booklet written in good taste be prepared. Then, together with the protest it will be 'like apples of gold in settings of silver and will achieve the desired goal.'"

R. Jacob Lipschitz accepted the assignment. He came to an agreement with R. Israel to gather together the articles written by R. Isaac Rabinowitz and himself, that had appeared in Halevanon. R. Israel also recommended that R. Jacob add such ideas of his own that might be advisable and provided him with the funds to cover the cost of printing.

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